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ADMINISTRATOR

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON CATHEDRAL

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LET US REJOICE--FOR THIS IS THE DAY THE LORD HAS MADE AND IT IS A WONDERFUL DAY--LET US REJOICE AND BE THANKFUL.

FOR WE DO HAVE A GREAT DEAL FOR WHICH WE CAN BE THANKFUL.

WE CAN BE THANKFUL FOR THE DEDICATION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF NASA HERE IN WASHINGTON AND AT THE FIELD CENTERS WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF OUR SUCCESSES.

AND FOR THE CONTINUING SUPPORT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH WHO HAVE BACKED OUR MANY PROGRAMS. IT TAKES FAITH AND VISION TO BE SUPPORTIVE OF OUR VENTURES, SOME OF WHICH DO NOT COME OFF FOR SEVEN OR EIGHT YEARS.

FOR THE CONSTANT SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT NASA HAS RECEIVED THROUGH THE YEARS FROM THE AMERICAN PUBLIC.

WE CAN BE THANKFUL FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN OF INDUSTRY AND IN THE WORLDS OF SCIENCE, ESPECIALLY IN THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITIES WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELL KNOWN TO US ALL.

AND FOR THE LOYALTY, THE SKILL AND COURAGE OF THE ASTRONAUT CORPS.

WE CAN BE THANKFUL FOR THE REMARKABLE SUCCESSES WE HAVE ENJOYED THROUGH THE YEARS, SUCCESSES IN OUR EFFORTS WHICH SOMETIMES I FEEL TRANSCEND OUR INDIVIDUAL SKILLS.

MY FRIENDS, GOD HAS PUT INTO THE HEARTS OF ALL OF US AN EXTRAORDINARY SENSE OF CURIOSITY AND A WONDERFUL SENSE OF ADVENTURE. THOSE QUALITIES HAVE ENABLED US TO MOVE OUT INTO ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD AND ALL AREAS OF LIFE, RESTLESSLY SEEKING TO LEARN, TO UNDERSTAND AND KNOW THE MEANING OF LIFE. EVEN THE MOST QUIET OF US HAS A SENSE OF ADVENTURE THAT ENABLES US TO TAKE RISKS TO SATISFY THIS GOD-GIVEN QUALITY OF OUR LIVES. THE WONDERFUL STORIES OF THE GREAT EXPLORERS ATTEST TO THIS. AND IN A HUMBLER WAY - BUT NO LESS BRAVE, - THE CARAVANS OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO CROSSED OUR COUNTRY IN SEARCH OF NEW TERRITORIES BEAR TESTIMONY TO MAN'S NEVER ENDING SEARCH FOR ADVENTURE AND NEW HORIZONS.

IN FEW ASPECTS OF OUR RECENT HISTORY HAVE THESE QUALITIES SHOWN FORTH MORE CLEARLY THAN IN THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF OUR SPACE ADVENTURE. OUR COUNTRY WAS WONDERFULLY UNITED AND THOSE OF US WHO WORKED TOGETHER IN NASA WERE ABLE TO MOVE INTO REACHES OF OUTER SPACE AND EVEN TO DO THAT WHICH MAN SELDOM DREAMED THAT HE COULD DO - LAND ON THE MOON! AND WHAT A GLORIOUS EXPERIENCE THAT HAS BEEN FOR THOSE OF US IN NASA AND, EVEN MORE, WHAT A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE THAT HAS BEEN FOR OUR NATION AND THE WORLD. IT HAS BROUGHT TO US ALL KINDS OF BLESSINGS.

WHILE THOSE REWARDS ARE MANY, THERE IS NONE TO ME THAT IS MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN THE PICTURE THAT SHOWED THIS LITTLE PLANET WHIRLING AROUND IN A GREAT VOID. THAT PICTURE BROUGHT BACK FROM APOLLO 17 ENABLED US TO UNDERSTAND AS NEVER BEFORE HOW SMALL AND FRAGILE IS THIS EARTH OF OURS. IT HAS MADE COMPELLING TO ALL OF US THAT WE MUST LIVE TOGETHER ON OUR EARTH AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS, OR NOT LIVE AT ALL. WHAT A FUNDAMENTAL RELIGIOUS TRUTH. THIS IS THE EARTH WHICH THE LORD HAS MADE, WE ARE THE DWELLERS THEREON. IN HIS SPIRIT WE MUST LEARN TO LIVE TOGETHER AS ONE GREAT FAMILY, OR NOT LIVE.

THE ASTRONAUTS VIEWING OUR PLANET FROM FAR INTO SPACE HAVE BEEN DEEPLY MOVED. YOU WILL RECALL THE CREW OF APOLLO 8 - BORMAN, LOVELL AND ANDERS READING FROM GENESIS. WHO WILL EVER FORGET WHEN BILL ANDERS' VOICE CAME THROUGH TO US SAYING.

"IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH. AND THE EARTH WAS WITHOUT FORM, AND VOID AND DARKNESS WAS UPON THE FACE OF THE DEEP. AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD MOVED UPON THE FACE OF THE WATERS. AND GOD SAID, 'LET THERE BE LIGHT', AND THERE WAS LIGHT. AND GOD SAW THE LIGHT AND THAT IT WAS GOOD, AND GOD DIVIDED THE LIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS."

AND THEN FRANK BORMAN'S PRAYER:

"GIVE US, O GOD, THE VISION WHICH CAN SEE THY LOVE
IN THE WORLD, IN SPITE OF HUMAN FAILURE. GIVE US
THE FAITH TO TRUST THE GOODNESS IN SPITE OF OUR
IGNORANCE AND WEAKNESS. GIVE US THE KNOWLEDGE
THAT WE MAY CONTINUE TO PRAY WITH UNDERSTANDING
HEARTS, AND SHOW US WHAT EACH ONE OF US CAN DO
TO SET FORTH THE COMING OF THE DAY OF UNIVERSAL
PEACE."

HAVING CONCLUDED THE PRAYER, FRANK SAID, "I WAS SUPPOSE TO
LAY-READ TONIGHT AT ST. CHRISTOPHER'S, AND I COULDN'T MAKE IT."

AMONG THE MANY BEAUTIFUL WINDOWS IN THIS CATHEDRAL IS ONE
DEDICATED TO AMERICA'S EXPLORATIONS IN SPACE. ON JULY 21, 1974,
WHEN THIS WINDOW WAS DEDICATED, ASTRONAUTS ARMSTRONG, ALDRIN AND
COLLINS OF APOLLO 11 WENT TO THIS ALTER AND IN A MOVING SERVICE
PRESENTED TO THE CATHEDRAL A SMALL ROCK BROUGHT BACK FROM THE MOON.
THAT SMALL LUNAR ROCK NOW IS THE CENTER PIECE OF THE SPACE WINDOW.

VISITORS FROM THROUGHOUT OUR LAND AND FROM OVERSEAS PAUSE EACH DAY AND CONTEMPLATE, EACH IN HIS OWN WAY, WHAT THIS WINDOW AND THIS PIECE OF LUNAR MATERIAL IS TELLING US. WHILE THEY SELDOM GIVE EXPRESSION TO THEIR INNER THOUGHTS, I AM SURE IT IS A REMINDER OF THE PRESENCE HERE IN THIS CATHEDRAL OF THE SPIRIT OF THE ALMIGHTY, WHAT HE TAUGHT US AND TEACHES US, A REMINDER OF THE PRESENCE OF THE CREATOR OF ALL LIFE ON THIS FINITE EARTH, AND ALL THAT IS IN THE INFINITE REACHES OF THE UNIVERSE.

THE DARK SPHERES, THE TINY WHITE STARS IN THE SPACE WINDOW, AND THE WHITE LINE OF THE ORBIT INSPIRE ALL OF US TO CONTEMPLATE WITH AWE THE MYSTERY OF OUR UNIVERSE AND, INDEED THAT IS IN ALL OF LIFE. FOR THAT WE CAN BE GRATEFUL.

TODAY WE PROBE THE EDGES OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM. NO OTHER GENERATION HAS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OR THE TECHNOLOGY TO REACH BEYOND OUR WORLD, TO SEE, TO TOUCH, TO HEAR THE FORCES THAT SHAPE OUR UNIVERSE. IN A QUARTER OF A CENTURY MAN HAS INGENIOUSLY EXPLORED FIVE DISTANT PLANETS, AND TWO DOZEN MOONS. WE HAVE SEEN THEIR WEATHER AND SURFACES, LANDED ON SOME, PROBED THE ATMOSPHERES OF OTHERS, AND LISTENED TO THEIR RADIO NOISES.

JAMES MICHENER, A GREAT FRIEND OF NASA'S, IN FACT A MEMBER OF OUR SPACE COUNCIL WHICH IS A GROUP OF DISTINGUISHED AMERICANS WITH WHOM WE MEET REGULARLY FOR DISCUSSION OF OUR GOALS, HAS WRITTEN THESE LINES:

EACH ERA OF HISTORY PROGRESSES TO A POINT AT WHICH IT IS ELIGIBLE TO WRESTLE WITH THE GREAT PROBLEM OF THAT PERIOD. FOR THE ANCIENT GREEKS IT WAS THE ORGANIZATION OF SOCIETY; FOR THE ROMANS IT WAS THE ORGANIZATION OF EMPIRE; FOR THE MEDIEVALISTS THE SPELLING OUT OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD; FOR THE MEN OF THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES THE MASTERY OF THE OCEANS; AND FOR US IT IS THE DETERMINATION OF HOW MANKIND CAN LIVE IN HARMONY ON THIS FINITE GLOBE WHILE ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS TO INFINITE SPACE.

MICHENER - AN ARTICULATE WRITER - HAS DEFINED THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE.

I MENTIONED EARLIER SEVERAL OF THE REASONS I FEEL ENCOURAGE US TO REJOICE ON THIS WONDERFUL DAY AND BE THANKFUL.

THERE IS ONE MORE. -- WE CAN BE THANKFUL FOR THE ENTHUSIASM OF OUR YOUTH WHO HAVE ATTACHED THEMSELVES IN SO MANY WAYS TO THE EXPLORATION OF SPACE. HERE IS THE FUTURE OF SPACE AND IT WILL BE IN TALENTED HANDS.